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Office of Personnel Management

# **Grade-level Guide for Positions Requiring Collateral Correctional Skills**

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# Grade Level Guide for Positions Requiring Collateral Correctional Skills

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## COVERAGE

This guide is for use in evaluating the grade level of positions having, collaterally with specialized subject-matter skill or knowledge, a requirement for the knowledge and application of correctional skills. Such positions are located in correctional institutions or similar facilities confining criminal offenders.

This guide supersedes Part III (Guides for the Classification of Positions in which Knowledge of Penology is a Complementary Requirement) of the classification standard for the Correctional Officer Series, GS-007, issued in February 1963.

## POSITIONS NOT EVALUATED BY THIS GUIDE

1. Positions that, although located in a correctional environment, do not involve regular and recurring responsibility for supervising work activities of inmates. Such positions are classified entirely by reference to the occupational standards appropriate to the subject-matter knowledges and skills of the position. This evaluation will take into account any materially increased responsibilities that may result from the correctional environment, without application of this guide.
2. Positions having as their paramount requirement the knowledge and application of correctional skills and techniques in the correctional treatment, custody, and supervision of criminal offenders. Such positions are classified by reference to the standard for the Correctional Officer Series, GS-007.
3. Positions having as their paramount qualification requirement trade, craft, or manual labor knowledges and skills, but including as a complementary requirement the custody, supervision, and correctional treatment of inmates. Such positions are evaluated in accordance with the provisions of the Coordinated Federal Wage System.
4. Positions in which the basic nature of the work includes the application of knowledges, skills, and abilities essentially equivalent to those required for the supervision of inmate workers. These positions, such as teacher, psychologist, social worker, recreation specialist, etc., are classified entirely by reference to the appropriate occupational standards.

5. Positions (typically in professional, administrative, and technical occupations at grades GS-8 and above) involving the supervision of inmate workers when the tasks performed by the inmates are of a significantly lower level of difficulty (and usually of a different kind) than the non-correctional duties performed by the incumbent. The grades warranted by the subject-matter duties and responsibilities are at levels such that the additional correctional duties do not substantially increase the overall difficulty of the positions. For example, the degree of difficulty of a GS-9 librarian position is not sufficiently influenced by the supervision of several inmates performing routine typing and clerical tasks to warrant additional grade-level credit. On the other hand, for the same GS-9 position, the difficulty of supervising inmates performing relatively high grade-level librarian or library technician work (as indicated by responsibilities for training, assigning and reviewing work, etc.) may have grade-level significance.
6. Positions that involve the indirect supervision of inmates through subordinates. Such positions receive appropriate credit through the augmented grades credited to the subordinate positions. These positions are evaluated by reference to the appropriate occupational standards and/or the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide, the base level of work supervised should include the augmented grades as determined by this standard.
7. Positions involving both the supervision of regular (non-inmate) employees and the direct supervision of inmate workers (not through subordinates). Full "double" credit for the combination is not appropriate. Such positions should be evaluated as follows:
  - a. If the supervision over regular (non-inmate) employees results in the same grade as, or a higher grade than, would result from the application of this guide, additional supervision of inmates will not ordinarily affect the grade.
  - b. If the application of this guide results in a higher grade than would result from credit for the supervision of regular (non-inmate) employees, the appropriate higher grade is applicable.

## **SERIES AND TITLE DETERMINATION**

Positions evaluated by application of this guide are classified in the most appropriate series in accordance with the definitions published in the "Handbook of Occupational Groups and Series of Classes" and guidance material in published classification standards.

The basic titles of positions evaluated by this guide will be those provided in the appropriate classification standards or established by reference to the practices described in the Introduction to Position Classification Standards. In addition, the basic titles are modified by the term "Correctional" in parenthesis, e.g., Accounts Maintenance Clerk (Correctional), GS-520.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The operation of a correctional institution requires a variety of jobs to carry out its objectives. Some of these are primarily concerned with the custody and treatment of the criminal offenders, such as the Correctional Officers, Psychologists, and Social Workers. Others provide services in support of the primary mission of the organization. The latter types of jobs, e.g., accounting clerks, records maintenance clerks, and others, are basically the same as those found in many business or Government establishments. However, because of the unusual population and goals of correctional institutions, many of these support jobs involve tasks not required in similar positions located in non-correctional activities. Specifically, they require supervision of inmate workers in the performance of tasks related to the support work.

The objectives of supervising inmate workers go beyond those typical of normal supervisory jobs. One major goal, of course, is to accomplish the various tasks necessary for the operation of the institution. In addition, however, the supervisor of inmate workers is expected to contribute to the primary goal of the correctional system by teaching the offenders attitudes and skills necessary to their rehabilitation and integration into the free society. In addition to their special occupational skills, supervisors of inmate workers have or develop the ability to instruct, evaluate, control and direct offenders. They encourage contacts with other institutional programs, advise on family and community responsibilities, and enhance economic stability by improving work habits.

There are, therefore, significant differences between supervising inmate workers and supervising a staff of non-inmate employees. Some of the duties normally thought of as being an integral part of a supervisor's job are either absent or limited in the job of the supervisor of inmate workers. Such functions as selection of employees, performance evaluation, recommendation for promotion, approval of leave and vacation, etc., are not performed. On the other hand, supervisors of inmate workers encounter problems in the areas of work assignments and review, job training, motivation, and security not normally found to the same degree in non-correctional situations.

For these reasons, the factors in the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide, applicable to the vast majority of supervisory positions in the General Schedule, are not directly applicable for evaluating General Schedule positions that involve supervising inmate workers in a correctional environment. The purpose of this guide is to provide evaluation criteria applicable to those factors that influence the difficulty of supervising inmate workers.

## METHOD OF EVALUATION

Positions covered by this guide are evaluated as follows:

1. Identify the kind, or kinds of work, other than correctional, involved in the position.
2. Evaluate the work identified by the appropriate classification standard(s).  
If responsibility for supervising regular (non-inmate) employees is involved, do not count inmates supervised in applying the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide (see (7), under Positions Not Evaluated By This Guide for guidelines for evaluating positions involving direct supervision of both regular employees and inmate workers).
3. Determine the appropriate credit for supervising inmate workers by comparison with the criteria in this guide.
  - (a) Positions with duties and responsibilities substantially equivalent to those described in this guide may be classified one grade higher than is appropriate for the non-correctional duties and responsibilities evaluated under (2) above.
  - (b) Positions in which the correctional duties and responsibilities are in any significant respect less than those described in this guide will receive no additional grade credit.
  - (c) Positions in which the correctional duties and responsibilities clearly and substantially exceed the criteria for no less than 3 of the 5 factors in this guide may be classified two grades higher than is appropriate for the non-correctional duties and responsibilities evaluated under (2) above (these situations are fairly rare).

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Positions are evaluated by comparing the correctional duties and responsibilities with descriptions of typical work situations for each of five factors. These factors are:

- 1 -- Scope of Responsibility
- 2 -- Planning, Assignment, and Review
- 3 -- Training
- 4 -- Guidance

## 5 -- Security

The work situations described for any single factor are not intended, in themselves, to establish grade levels. Rather, they are each intended to be illustrative of the concept of an overall level of difficulty, represented by the combination of factors, that warrants one grade level above that warranted by the non-correctional duties and responsibilities. The final grade-level determination should be made by use of sound classification judgment based on comparison with the characteristics provided for all of the factors.

### **FACTOR 1 -- SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

The supervisor of inmate workers normally supervises from 2 to 8 inmates<sup>1</sup> and the level of difficulty of the supervisory relationships and responsibilities is at least equivalent to the criteria for the other factors described below.

### **FACTOR 2 -- PLANNING, ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW**

The basic work methods and procedures are common to most jobs in the occupation and/or are established by superiors. Planning is concerned mainly with (a) the breakdown of the work into assignments that can be performed by the inmates assigned to the unit, and (b) the flow of work on a day-to-day basis. In assigning tasks to individual inmates, the supervisor takes into account the difficulty of the work to be done and the capability of the individual inmate. He prepares written instructions and guidelines for the performance of required tasks, or provides this information orally as the need exists. Typically, he must review the work performed by inmates carefully to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Planning, assignment, and review functions are complicated by such factors as:

- (a) most inmates assigned to a unit do not initially have the skills and abilities necessary to do the work. Thus, the assignments must often be revised and

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<sup>1</sup> In most situations, the difficulty of supervising one inmate worker is not sufficient to warrant additional grade-level credit. In rare instances, however, the problems encountered in supervising one inmate may be sufficiently great that they are substantially equivalent in overall level of difficulty to those typical of the supervision of a larger number of workers. Sound classification judgment should be used in applying the criteria in this guide to determine whether one additional grade credit should be allowed.



reassigned to accommodate the level of skills of the more experienced and newly assigned workers.

- (b) day-to-day changes in assignments are frequently necessary because of a high rate of temporary absence from the job due to the many other requirements of institutional life. He must reassign the duties of the missing worker to other inmates or he must perform them himself, either of which creates additional problems.
- (c) work completed by inmates must be more carefully reviewed than would be required for regular non-inmate employees because of (1) their lack of full job skills and knowledges, and (2) the possibility of careless or intentional errors made by inmates who lack the motivation to perform satisfactory work.

### **FACTOR 3 -- TRAINING**

Since very few inmates come to the job with good work habits, skills or knowledges, the supervisor of inmate workers must provide sufficient training to get the work accomplished. He conducts training on an on-the-job rather than a formal classroom basis. He plans the work assignments to provide progressively more difficult tasks until the inmates can perform the work with a normal degree of supervision. In addition to training in the actual performance of job related tasks, the supervisor of inmate workers must develop in them the motivation to learn and to do satisfactory work, and encourage good work habits such as punctuality, neatness, etc.

The training function is complicated by the following:

- (a) there is typically a relatively high turnover in inmate workers because of release from the institution, enrollment in other programs, and most often, changes to other jobs which are frequently initiated by the inmates because of the higher pay provided for other jobs, e.g., in Federal Prison Industries. This turnover places an almost continuous requirement for training on the supervisor of inmate workers, as few inmates with fully developed skills stay on the job for an extended period of time.
- (b) inmate workers vary widely in socio-economic and educational backgrounds, levels of intelligence, and prior work experience. The training methods used must vary according to the abilities of the inmates to learn.

## **FACTOR 4 -- GUIDANCE**

Inmate workers, as a result of the imprisonment and the life style that preceded and led to their confinement, have a variety of problems not directly related to the performance of the job to which they are assigned. The supervisor of inmate workers, who has direct contact for a significant portion of the inmate's time, has the opportunity to influence the attitudes and behavior of the individuals assigned to him.

To do this, the supervisor of inmate workers observes the inmates under his supervision, talks to them, and learns enough about them and their problems to be able to offer advice on resolving these problems. Problem areas typically are concerned with adjustment to institutional life, interpretation and explanation of institution rules and regulations, and relatively simple personal problems involving persons or events outside the institution. The supervisor of inmate workers refers the inmates to appropriate sources of assistance when the problems are beyond his ability or authority to handle them. He also prepares periodic and special reports concerning the overall behavior and adjustment of the inmates, which are used in determining future treatment and rehabilitation goals.

## **FACTOR 5 -- SECURITY**

In addition to the work direction and guidance functions described above, the supervisor of inmate workers is responsible for keeping the inmates assigned to him safely in custody and for generally maintaining the security of the institution. He receives training in the principles and practices of institution security and standards of conduct.

The supervisor of inmate workers normally works in areas where security problems are not serious, such as in an office within a fenced or walled enclosure. Dangerous items such as knives are not available to a significant extent. On the other hand, contraband items, such as commissary goods and restricted information are often available at the work site. The supervisor of inmate workers must carefully control and account for these items. He observes the behavior of assigned inmates to detect actual or potential security problems and reports significant observations to appropriate officials. He may be required to search inmates on a regular or spot-check basis to stop contraband items from leaving the work area. He is also responsible for maintaining discipline and for knowing the whereabouts of assigned inmates at all times during working hours.

